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Quoting Jabotinsky on a 'Jewish State' and its Arabs

[Michael Brenner](#) has a blog post wherein he writes about the new Jewish Nation State legislation and notes:

It may come as a surprise to many that Vladimir Ze'ev Jabotinsky...was not that different [than Herzl] in his views of a future Jewish state. While his conviction that Jews should be allowed to settle on both sides of the Jordan and his vision of a state with a strong Jewish army are certainly no secrets today, it is less known that all [?] a Jewish state meant for him was a territory in which Jews enjoyed a sufficient degree of sovereignty in their internal and external affairs and in which they constituted a majority.

In *The Jewish War Front*, his last book before his premature death in 1940...Jabotinsky draws on the draft constitution worked out by the Revisionist Executive in 1934.

In Jabotinsky's vision of a future Jewish state, the inhabitants not only all enjoy equal individual rights, but both Jews and Arabs share equal collective autonomous rights as well. Jabotinsky writes:

In every Cabinet where the Prime Minister is a Jew, the



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My thoughts, assertions and observations on issues important to me as a Jew, a Zionist, a Revenant in Yesha and as an inquisitive human being.

About Me



[YMedad](#)

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American born, my wife and I moved to Israel in 1970. We have lived at Shiloh together with our family since 1981. I was in the Betar youth movement in the US and UK. I have worked as a political aide to Members of Knesset and a Minister during 1981-1994, lectured at the Academy

vice-premiership shall be offered to an Arab, and vice-versa. Proportional sharing by Jews and Arabs both in the charges and in the benefits of the State shall be the rule with regard to Parliamentary elections, civil and military service, and budgetary grants... Both Hebrew and Arabic shall be used with equal legal effect in Parliament, in the schools, and in general before any office or organ of the State... The Jewish and the Arab ethno-communities shall be recognized as autonomous public bodies of equal status before the law... Each ethno-community shall elect its National Diet with the rights to issue ordinances and levy taxes within the limits of its autonomy, and to appoint a national executive responsible before the Diet.

And just like Herzl, Jabotinsky states: "After all, it is from Jewish sources that the world has learned how 'the stranger within thy gates' should be treated."

but he concludes that

...to turn Israel from a Jewish state into a more Jewish state is not only an unnecessary provocation to Israel's Arab citizens. It also ignores the vision of its founders right underneath their images proudly displayed inside the Likud headquarters.

The [book](#), and it may come as a surprise even to Brenner that it [was reviewed the Foreign Affairs](#), is no surprise to my readers as I have quoted from it and particularly that passage many times. I even [quoted an extreme anti-Zionist](#) quoting that book favorably.

One always [need be careful](#) when dealing with quotations from Jabotinsky. Excerpts must be faithful to the fundamental conceptualization of the author's thinking so that the quotation cannot be used for a purpose which is contrary to the author's outlook.

for National Studies 1977-1994, was director of Israel's Media Watch 1995-2000 and currently, I work at the Menachem Begin Heritage Center in Jerusalem. I was a guest media columnist on media affairs for The Jerusalem Post, op-ed contributor to various journals and for six years had a weekly media show on Arutz 7 radio. I serve as an unofficial spokesperson for the Jewish Communities in Judea & Samaria.

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For example, Jabotinsky writes in his introduction to the article that

Nothing, of course, is perfect on this earth, and there is no doubt that it is pleasanter to be in the majority than in the minority, even under the best conditions imaginable; but that does not mean that the status of a minority is everywhere and always a tragedy. Every great people has its outlying fragments which form minorities in other countries...

Today's reality amongst Israel's Arab minority is not quite that. They do think of their status a tragedy, the events of 1948 that caused their status a *nakba*, catastrophe, and have, in increasing numbers and ferocity, acted with violence to the idea of a Jewish state. Can Jabotinsky's idyllic vision be easily applied today, without a period of reduction of Arab hostility on the one hand and, on the other, a coming to terms with Israel, by Arabs both within and without?

Secondly, Jabotinsky does add a qualifier:

The draft is not an official programme, and the writer is not prepared to defend it in all its aspects.

And even while extending assurances and guarantees, Jabotinsky writes:

...the Jews are ready to guarantee to the Arab minority in a Jewish Palestine the maximum of the rights which they claimed but never obtained for themselves in other countries.

The "Jews", and not Israelis; "Jewish Palestine" echoing today's "Jewish State". As Jabotinsky

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writes in introducing his thinking on the basic issue of civic equality:

1. Provided nothing be done to hinder any foreign Jew from repatriating to Palestine, and, by doing so, automatically becoming a Palestinian citizen, the principle of equal rights for all citizens of any race, creed, language or class shall be enacted without limitation throughout all sectors of the country's public life.

there are certain inbuilt constitutional privileges, like the one above echoing Israel's own Law of Return, which Arabs combat and refuse to accept.

Jabotinsky knew that Muslim Arabs were problematic as regards the entire question of Jewish nationalism and so he added this:

Should the Christian Arabs, or any other group of citizens reasonably justified in claiming autonomy, also demand a measure of independent recognition, Parliament shall be entitled to grant the request.

Do our progressive liberals accept that? Would that lead to bifurcation of our society? Is that good or bad? Should not all citizens feel patriotic and compliant to a general state culture?

Following that line of thought, Jabotinsky continued and wrote:

The following matters shall be delegated by the State to each ethno-community with regard to its members:
(a) religion and personal status;
(fa) education in all its branches and grades, especially in the compulsory elementary stages;

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Again, is that agreeable to our liberals, as with the ultra-Orthodox community or will they fight to have core educational themes incorporated in their curriculum? And would the right-of-center and even a good deal of the centrist elements agree to this:

THE HOLY PLACES

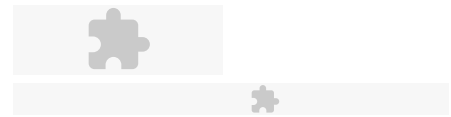
1. The relevant areas within the Old City of Jerusalem, to be delimited under the authority of the League of Nations, shall enjoy the same measure of extra-territoriality as that universally recognized in the case of embassies.

And what if the Arabs disagreed with all this? What was Jabotinsky's thinking? Here:

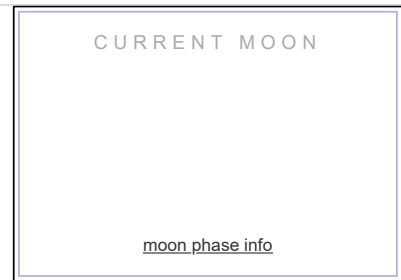
Whether the Arabs would find all this a sufficient inducement to remain in a Jewish country is another question. Even if they did not, the author would refuse to see a tragedy or a disaster in their willingness to emigrate. The Palestine Royal Commission did not shrink from the suggestion. Courage is infectious. Since we have this great moral authority for calmly envisaging the exodus of 350,000 Arabs from one corner of Palestine, we need not regard the possible departure of 900,000 with dismay. The writer, as he has already said, cannot see any necessity for this exodus: it would even be undesirable from many points of view; but if it should appear that the Arabs would prefer to migrate, the prospect can be discussed without any pretence of concern.

I think it, too, quite necessary to quote Jabotinsky's logic for ignoring many of the Arab demands and complaints:



There is, moreover, one great ethical difference between the case of Palestine and that of all the other poly-ethnic areas...In all the other areas



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friction is caused by ambition: one section wishes to dominate, or so at least the weaker section fears. Such an ambition may be, or seem, justifiable or excusable, in the sense that it is an expression of inherited vitality...In Palestine any inconvenience to the native population from the influx of immigrants arises from the tragic necessity that these immigrants must find a home. It has nothing to do with ambition, nothing to do with the will to dominate over anyone...The cause is genuine hunger, the nostalgic passion of people who have nowhere else where they can make a home for themselves.

That need still exists and it does not gain any sympathy with our Arabs.

One can quote Jabotinsky. One must do so correctly and fairly and one must be able to adapt his principles to current realities.

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Posted by [YMedad](#) at [10:36 AM](#) 

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